



April 26, 2010

Chairman Julius Genachowski  
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Preserving the Open Internet  
GN Docket No. 09-191; WC Docket No. 07-52**

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners,

On behalf of the millions of Americans of Hispanic descent whose interests we represent, we write to express our views on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. As a broad coalition of community development organizations, not-for-profit foundations, social service providers, and chambers of commerce that focus on the needs of the Hispanic community, we urge the FCC to carefully gather all the facts and seek informed counsel before issuing rules on network

neutrality to achieve the ambitious goals set out in the National Broadband Plan. The Commission must focus its efforts on encouraging investment in our communities so that the real and tangible goals of universal adoption and use for our communities will be met.

Every day, we see the power of broadband bring real benefits to the people we serve, whether it is an unemployed worker looking for his next job, a struggling student supplementing classroom lessons with online tutors, a mother of an ailing child who needs to access the right medical care, or a busy father who has no time to stand in line for service at a government agency during his short lunch break.

The Commission's "Broadband Adoption and Use in America" survey which was released in February revealed that Hispanics who understand the benefits of broadband tend to use it more vigorously than non-Hispanics. For example, 68 percent of Hispanics use broadband to search and apply for jobs, compared to the average of 59 percent. Additionally, the survey found that 39 percent of Hispanics have accessed the Internet through their mobile device, and one quarter of Hispanics who do not have home broadband access have used the Internet through wireless devices.

While we know how important broadband is to our community, we regret that there are so many underserved Hispanics who are desperate to have access. The Commission's survey found that 49 percent of Hispanics have broadband at home, but for those Hispanics who took the survey in Spanish, their broadband adoption rate is only 20 percent. Furthermore, Hispanics under 30 years old trail their non-Hispanic counterparts by 57 percent to 75 percent.

The survey also showed that while Hispanics find broadband very important for keeping up with news about their community, 52 percent of those without broadband today cite cost as the main obstacle. Thus it is clear that there is a broadband access gap among Hispanics. Our community wants broadband access but many people simply cannot afford it, or do not have access to it. We therefore urge the Commission to continue to focus its priority on universal broadband deployment and adoption.

On March 16, 2010, the Commission presented its National Broadband Plan to Congress following almost a year of unprecedented amount of public input and fact finding that included listening to thousands of ordinary citizens as well as industry and policy experts. We applaud President Obama and Congress for making broadband access a national priority and we appreciate all the hard work that went into drafting this Plan.

We find that the Plan's primary emphasis is exactly where it should be, and that is focusing on deployment and adoption of broadband by all Americans. We also support the Plan's focus on identifying barriers to deployment and adoption so that the Hispanic broadband gap can be overcome. Broadband access will empower all Americans, but especially the communities of color who continue to fall behind others economically and politically. By removing these barriers to broadband, we know that new opportunities for Hispanics will be created so that we can overcome the digital divide.

In addition to seeking universal deployment and adoption, the Plan includes several other laudable goals that we agree should be priorities for all Americans. For example, we support expanding and improving Health IT as a concrete step toward improving the quality of healthcare and lowering costs. Numerous studies, such as the Benton Foundation's, have demonstrated that smart use of information technology in the healthcare industry can save \$670 per household per year, or about 25 percent of a median American family's total out-of-pocket costs for healthcare.

We also support the Plan's proposal to reform the E-Rate program to better enable schools and libraries to connect students and citizens to educational resources. As mentioned above, access, availability and affordability are key barriers for Hispanics having broadband. Schools and libraries are a great resource for many in our community, young and old, who want to use the tool but simply cannot have it at home.

We also applaud the Plan's initiative to utilize smart grids. Hispanics, like all Americans, will benefit from energy cost savings and efficiency. Additionally, creating a nationwide interoperable public safety network will improve physical security.

To implement all of these important goals of the Plan, it seems clear that the heaviest burden will be placed upon the private sector that will need to make major investments in the broadband infrastructure. The Commission staff has estimated that up to \$350 billion in investments may be needed to expand broadband throughout the country. Private sector investments in broadband will also stimulate the economy and create jobs that are sorely needed today.

A 2007 Brookings Institute study found that for every 1% increase in broadband penetration in a state, employment is projected to increase by 0.2% to 0.3% per year – the equivalent of 300,000 jobs. The worst possible action that the Commission could take would be to impose vague, unnecessary and rigid rules like network neutrality that will inhibit these major investments from being made and delay competition and innovation. For this reason, we are pleased that the policies set forth in the Plan resisted calls to impose heavy-handed regulation on the broadband market. However, the current regulatory rules being considered by the FCC threaten the ability for our communities to get connected to new IT opportunities. Net neutrality regulations will thwart the FCC's ability to get broadband out to lower income and minority communities and continue to increase the digital divide – an increase that our Hispanic constituents cannot afford and our organizations will not tolerate.

Over the past decade, the industry collectively has invested over \$200 billion in broadband networks. The Commission should now rely on the industry to exceed this level of investment in order to implement the Plan. We hope that this stark reality will be a reminder to the Commission that a thriving market, free of heavy-handed government regulations, is the best environment to attract investments. Without extraordinary private sector investments, we do not see how the Plan can move from policy objectives to action, and for our community to benefit from the promise of ubiquitous broadband.

The Plan wisely contemplates maintaining the competitive environment that has already provided so much innovation and worthwhile investments. We hope the Commission and

Congress will maintain this robust, competitive playing field, so that we can continue the progress toward universal broadband for all Americans and ensure the Hispanic community connects to the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Sincerely,



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Ignacio Salazar  
President & CEO  
SER – Jobs for Progress National, Inc



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Gus West  
Board Chair  
The Hispanic Institute

Co-Chair  
Hispanic Technology and Telecommunications Partnership (HTTP)



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Dr. Juan Andrade  
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Javier Palomarez  
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Hector Barreto  
Chairman  
The Latino Coalition (TLC)



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Nestor Montilla  
President  
Dominican American National Roundtable (DANR)